

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, PLOS, CM, NI

SUBJ: AHIDJO AND GOWON AGREE ON MARITIME BOUNDARY

REF: YAOUNDE 1840

1. SUMMARY:. JOINT COMMUNIQUE ISSUED ON CONCLUSION AHIDJO-GOWON MEETING JUNE 1 INDICATED AGREEMENT REACHED ON PRECISE DEMARCATION OF DISPUTED MARITIME BORDER (BUT NO DETAILS YET AVAILABLE). IN ADDITION TO USUAL PIETIES ON BILATERAL RELATIONS AND AFRIVMF AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES, TWO OTHER ITEMS OF SPECIAL INTEREST MENTIONED: CAMEROON'S CHINESE-ASSISTED LAGDO DAM PROJECT, AND RECENTLY ESTABLISHED ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES (ECOWAS).

2. ACCNRDING UAL PRESS, AMBIANCE OF TALKS AND ENTIRE MAY 30-31 JUNE 1 GOWON VISIT TO MAROUA WAS ESPECIALLY WARM. GOWON LED HIGH-POWERED 45-MEMBER NIGERIAN DELEGATION, AND AHIDJO ALSO HAD A LARGE ARRAY OF KEY ADVISERS AND TECHNICIANS.

3. (A) FINAL COMMUNIQUE EMPHASIZED DISCUSSIONS ON MARITIME FRONTIER ON WHICH FULL AGREEMENT REACHED ON PRECISE DEMARCATION AS
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DEFINED IN "MAROUA DECLARATION OF JUNE 1, 1975, AND ITS ANNEX".

ALSO CITED REAFFIRMATION BY BOTH CHIEFS OF STATE OF COMMITMENT TO GUARANTEE TO BOTH COUNTRIES' SHIPS FREEDOM AND SECFRITY OF NAVIGATION IN CALABAR-CROSS RIVER CHANNEL. (B) COMMENT. UNFORTUNATELY, MAROUA DECLARATION AND ITS ANNEX NOT PUBLISHED, AND NO FURTHER INFO YET AVAILABLE. UNLESS COMMUNIQUE REALLY MISLEADING, IT SOUNDS AS THOUGH A REAL SOLUTION HAS BEEN FOUND THIS TIME, AS OPPOSED TO LAST SEPTEMBER'S TEMPORARY PAPERING OVER OF CONTINUED DIFFERENCES.

4. (A) ACCORDING COMMUNIQUE, AHIDJO INFORMED GOWON OF LAGDO DAM PROJECT ON BENUE RIVER. GOWON PROMISED FMG WOULD "SUPPORT" PROJECT AND DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO MAINTAIN AND DEVELOP NAVIGATION ON BENUE AND USE OF ITS WATERS. (B) COMMENT: CHINESE TECHNICIANS FOR PAST CTO YEARS HAVE BEEN DOING PRELIMINARY STUDY AND SURVEY WORK ON LAGDO DAM PROJECT WHICH EXPECTED TO BE THE MAJOR CHINESE AID PROJECT AS PART OF 17 BILLION CFA (ABOUT DOLS. 85 MILLION AT PRESENT EXCHANGE RATE) CHINESE LINE OF CREDIT ANNOUNCED DURING AHIDJO STATE VISIT TO CHINA MARCH/APRIL 1973. IN ADDITION TO HYDROELECTRIC AND IRRIGATION ASPECTS, CHINESE AMBASSADOR REPORTEDLY ONCE MENTIONED PRIVATELY THAT PROJECT ALSO WOULD EVENTUALLY INVOLVE RIVER CONTROL WORK FAR DOWNSTREAM AND INTO NIGERIA.

5. (A) COMMUNIQUE STATED THAT GOWON BRIEFED AHIDJO ON RECENT WORK LEADING TO SIGNATURE OF ECOWAS TREATY AND AHIDJO HEARTILY CONGRATULATED HIM ON THE MATERIALIZATION OF ECOWAS, AN IMPORTANT ACHIEVEMENT TOWARD AFRICAN UNITY. (B) COMMENT: NOTHING SAID ABOUT EVENTUAL EXPANSION OF ECOWAS OR POSSIBLE CAMEROONIAN ADHERENCE. IN FACT, HOWEVER, CAMEROON VERY WARY OF NIGERIAN COLOSSUS TO ITS WEST AND WOULD FEEL LITTLE COMFORT IN EXPANDED ECOWAS EXTENDING THROUGH ZAIRE. CAMEROON VERY CONSCIOUS OF SELF AS LEADER OF ZONE BETWEEN THOSE TWO GIANTS AND NEED FOR SUCH ZONE TO PROTECT SELF FROM DOMINANCE BY EITHER.

6. COMMUNIQUE ALSO VERY FLORID IN PRAISE OF LAKE CHAD BASIN COMMISSION AND DETERMINATION BOTH STATES TO WORK FOR LCBC'S GOOD FUNCTIONING.

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